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New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 30 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/53/463, A/53/676)

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/52/849, A/52/850, A/52/851 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express once again the Russian delegation's gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for initiating the United Nations reform process, which literally encompasses all its structures. Some of the reforms have already been successfully completed and some are under operational implementation, while others, mainly those of a long-term nature, are being actively debated and fine-tuned.

Considering that agenda item 30 includes issues pertaining to rather diverse themes, our delegation would like to outline concisely its position on all issues under consideration while reserving its right to present, as appropriate, more detailed comments at a later stage. This also pertains to the report just issued on the implementation of United Nations reform measures (A/53/676). We are studying the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of a number of reform measures, but consider that such serious documents should not be presented at the last minute before the discussion, but rather should be presented in advance.

Allow me to focus on specific elements of the agenda item before us. Russia supports real reform of the activities of the United Nations system in the sphere of the environment and human settlements. We view positively the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements under the chairmanship of Mr. Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). We also welcome the report the Task Force has submitted for our consideration and the relevant report of the Secretary-General. The recommendations contained in it generally follow the lines of the Nairobi Declaration of the Governing Council of UNEP, the Habitat II Conference and the sixteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, and create a good framework for constructive dialogue.

We support the proposal to establish an environmental management group under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP. We believe that the right approach to this body has been chosen, aimed at efficiently solving emerging problems and achieving concrete results. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the group does not duplicate the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development.

We view positively the recommendations on strengthening interaction among environmental conventions and their support by UNEP. However, in our

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view, at this stage, the proposals on geographical relocation of conventions and the development of so-called umbrella conventions appear to be somewhat premature. We believe we should follow a step-by-step approach in this area.

The proposed measures covering the Nairobi-based organizations of the United Nations system deserve to be supported. In particular, we consider the integration and rationalization of administrative services of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to be very useful within the framework of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. We think that time has come for a closer programme correlation between UNEP and Habitat, while taking into account their specificities and ensuring the preservation of their autonomy. We are also prepared to consider constructively the proposals of the Secretary-General on the administrative strengthening of the United Nations Office at Nairobi within the framework of the draft United Nations budget for the next biennium.

The recommendations on strengthening the capacity of UNEP and Habitat in the field of information, monitoring, assessment and early warning go in the right direction and correspond, in our view, to the primary mandates of these bodies.

The proposals on the reorientation of the activities of the UNEP regional offices to provide assistance to Governments on the entire range of environmental problems and the formulation of regional priorities are aimed at improving practical results in their work. It is correct to raise the issue of the importance of establishing closer relations between the regional offices, United Nations system organizations located in the same place and potential donor organizations.

The proposal to hold annual sessions of the UNEP Governing Council at the ministerial level is interesting. But the question arises in this context as to the relationship between the new forum and the high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In considering this proposal we should fully acknowledge that its implementation will entail rethinking the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). It is important, in our view, to prevent steps aimed at reforming the environmental sector of the United Nations from undermining the role of the CSD and jeopardizing its productive work.

The recommendation to make the membership of the Governing Council of UNEP universal raises many questions. In our opinion, the arguments in favour of such a decision cannot completely dispel the doubts about the value it would add.

The strengthening of the role of UNEP as an implementation agency of the Global Environment Facility deserves to be supported, taking into account its catalytic functions and scientific potential. In principle, we have no objections to the set of recommendations on strengthening the relations of UNEP and Habitat with non-governmental organizations, business and organizations of civil society. However, the idea of establishing a special status for representatives of local authorities under the Commission on Human Settlements appears to be insufficiently developed and should be approached very cautiously.

The proposal to reconstitute the Trusteeship Council as the forum through which Member States exercise their collective trusteeship for the integrity of the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, the atmosphere and outer space seems debatable and requires further comprehensive consideration. In this case, we would in fact be dealing with the elimination of one of the principal United Nations bodies and the establishment of a new one. Clearly, the provisions of Chapter XIII of the United Nations Charter with regard to the specific functions and mandates of the Trusteeship Council and its membership cannot simply be adjusted. In such a case we would have to rewrite the entire chapter of the Charter.

Furthermore, given the global nature of specific issues falling under the mandate of a new body, it would be rather difficult from the legal point of view — even if it were possible — to list them all in the Charter. This in turn would inevitably lead to the duplication and substitution of the functions of a new body and, as a consequence, to the gradual diminishing of its authority. As can be seen from document A/52/849, the new forum is conceived as a high-level council that could take a comprehensive, strategic and long-term view of global trends and provide policy guidance in monitoring global environment and sustainable development. This seems to imply the subordination to a high-level council of intergovernmental organizations and forums dealing with a broad range of similar issues at the sectoral level. It is very debatable how this would be implemented in practice.

We welcomed the decision by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session to designate its fifty-fifth session the Millennium Assembly, and we hope that during that session ideas on the renewal of the United

Nations aimed at effective adaptation to the tasks and challenges of the twenty-first century will be further developed. However, we believe that in the process of the practical implementation of measures proposed by the Secretary-General, due emphasis should be placed on the need to minimize expenses, given the current difficult financial situation of the Organization.

The proposal to establish a Special Commission at the ministerial level within the framework of the Millennium Assembly seems to our delegation not to be fully justifiable and to be difficult to implement, first and foremost because of the overloaded agenda of Foreign Ministers. At the same time, we have noted rather flexible wording in this regard in the note in document A/52/850, and we are prepared constructively to consider possible alternative proposals on the level of representation in such a Commission, as well as on its agenda, including the range of specialized agencies to be reviewed.

Finally, as we have already stated, the Russian delegation supports the proposal on sunset provisions. We consider it to be quite a useful idea aimed at increasing effectiveness in the implementation of United Nations programmes and activities. Its approval would, indeed, as the Secretary-General notes, facilitate the strengthening of the General Assembly in reviewing and monitoring the mandates approved by Member States. In this context, it would perhaps be worthwhile to propose that the Committee for Programme and Coordination and other relevant bodies of the General Assembly consider the possibility of expanding such practices to current mandates.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat for their efforts in the preparation of the various reports on the question of United Nations reform. My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

As we approach the next century, greater and greater demands are being placed on the United Nations to deal with a multiplicity of issues, such as development, international peace and security, the environment, population, promotion of human rights, humanitarian disasters and intra-State conflicts. Yet the United Nations remains handicapped in dealing with these issues on a sustained basis. Thus, in our view, if the United Nations is to remain a relevant and effective international instrument for addressing international challenges, concerns and issues, its capacity to meet them must be enhanced.

We recognize the important initiatives taken by the Secretary-General to make the Organization more efficient, effective and responsive to the needs of Member States. We are pleased to note that at its last session the General Assembly endorsed several of his reform proposals. We welcome those decisions, which are aimed at strengthening the Organization to enable it to implement fully and effectively all mandated programmes and activities, as well as enhancing its capacity in meeting the changing needs and requirements of the Member States as we prepare for the next century.

We reiterate the view that the primary objective of any further reform efforts should be to strengthen the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development and to restore development issues to the centre of the United Nations agenda, inasmuch as the majority of the Members are developing countries. It is essential for any reform process to be predicated on agreed priorities of the Organization and the key principles inherent in the United Nations Charter. We wish to add that without assured and adequate financial and political support from Member States, United Nations reform will ultimately become an exercise in futility.

At the current session, the General Assembly will continue its consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals for long-term changes. We agree with others that these proposals should be considered in an open and transparent manner to enable all Member States to participate not only in discussions of the issues but, more importantly, in the negotiation of draft resolutions.

Let me now comment on the various reports and notes of the Secretary-General before us on the status of implementation of the reform measures. In resolution 52/12 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the actions described in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". We regret, however, the late issuance of the report, and we reserve the right to comment on it at a later time.

At this stage, we wish to recall the decision of the General Assembly, in resolution 52/214, on the need to comply with the six-week rule in the issuance of United Nations documents.

We reiterate our full support for the United Nations programmes on environment and human settlements. We reaffirm the importance we attach to the achievement of

the goals of sustainable development and the full and effective implementation of Agenda 21.

My delegation is grateful for the Secretary-General's report on environment and human settlements, as well as the report of the United Nations Task Force, headed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Klaus Toepfer. The Secretary-General's report contains recommendations for action by the Secretariat, as well as by intergovernmental bodies. We believe that these recommendations deserve careful and in-depth consideration by Member States. In this regard, we support the view that this report must be considered in a manner that will allow all Member States the opportunity to participate in its discussion and sufficient time to reflect on these recommendations.

On the new concept of trusteeship, the Secretary-General, in his report on renewing the United Nations, proposed that the Trusteeship Council be reconstituted as the forum through which Member States exercise collective trusteeship over the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space, and that in the process it would serve as a link between the United Nations and civil society in addressing these areas of global concern.

The proposed change in the mandate of the Trusteeship Council calls for an amendment to the Charter of the United Nations. We note that there are existing procedures and mechanisms for effective dialogue with major groups in matters related to the environment and sustainable development. We also note the recommendation of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements for the possible role of a reconstituted Trusteeship Council in addressing these global areas of concern. We believe that the proposal should be thoroughly considered, bearing in mind the complexities involved in amending provisions of the Charter.

The General Assembly decided at its last session to designate the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly the Millennium Assembly. It further decided that the various aspects of the Secretary-General's proposal in this regard be considered at the current session.

We believe that the Millennium Assembly accords us, the Member States, with a historic opportunity to renew our commitment to the goals and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is imperative to begin the preparatory work for this important event. The task before us is to identify and to agree on the core issues for consideration by the Millennium Assembly, including the convening of the high-level segment referred to as the Millennium Summit.

In the current report, the Secretary-General suggests a different approach from his earlier proposal and proposes to submit a report on the theme "The United Nations in the twenty-first century", which will draw on three main sources. We believe that it is important to take into account the views, concerns and interests of Member States in the preparation of the report. We are open to suggestions as to the procedure for consideration of this proposal in all its aspects and can support the recommendation that the question of the Millennium Assembly be considered as a separate item from the current one.

Concerning time limits of new initiatives, we have taken note of the proposal of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/52/851 and Add.1, that initiatives involving new organizational structures and/or major commitments of funds be subjected to time limits, which would be reflected, at the outset, in the relevant resolutions and decisions establishing their mandates. We further note that this proposal has far-reaching implications on the existing regulations and rules governing programme planning and budgetary practices and procedures.

In this regard, we support the view of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China that it is of utmost importance for the relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, to undertake a thorough study of the Secretary-General's proposal. Such an approach will enable the General Assembly to benefit from their technical advice and to take an informed decision on the matter.

Mr. Smith (Australia): Australia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements, which contains in its annex the report of the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements. The direction it takes in strengthening and focusing United Nations activities in the environmental area is encouraging. In particular, Australia supports the report's general theme of integrating activities to increase efficiency. We agree there is scope for better linkages between the Conventions to achieve synergies and

promote coherence of policies and actions on the environment throughout the United Nations.

The report also advocates an increased focus for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on environmental policy rather than on administrative issues. This is an approach we endorse strongly. UNEP should increasingly play a valuable role in stimulating cooperative action by engaging Governments, of both developing and industrialized countries, in the development of environmental policy.

We would nonetheless have preferred a greater coverage of financial issues. The report refers to strengthening UNEP activities and the need for additional funding. We believe, however, that further work is still needed to focus UNEP priorities and streamline its work agenda. We also believe that internal reform of UNEP, such as implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, should also remain a priority, to complement the broader reforms of the programme.

We look forward to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in part III of his report being incorporated into a coherent strategy as soon as possible. We support the idea of having a group designed to improve coordination within the United Nations Secretariat on environment issues — the environmental management group. However, it would be helpful to receive further information on how the environmental management group would improve on the existing Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group.

Given the urgency we attach to attaining stability and strengthening management of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), we support the current designation of Mr. Toepfer as Director-General of the United Nations office at Nairobi. We believe, however, that this arrangement should be subject to the extent of the demands placed on the position and welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to consider further the full implementation of this recommendation.

Having dealt with matters that are within the responsibility of the Secretary-General, I now want to address briefly those recommendations in the report which are the responsibility of Member States.

First, I would like to comment on linkages among, and support to, environmental and environment-related Conventions. We recognize the growing problems arising from the fragmentation of the international environment agenda and support the report's long-term strategic goal of strengthening the linkages between the conventions to achieve synergies and promote coherence of policies and actions. We agree with the importance of improving UNEP's monitoring and assessment capacity and support efforts to improve coordination and discussion of cross-cutting issues between the conventions.

Secondly, the recommendations regarding intergovernmental forums are wide-ranging. While we endorse the essential objective of strengthening UNEP meetings as high-level forums in which ministers discuss key policy issues rather than administrative issues, we have some reservations about certain aspects of the proposals in the report.

The existing high-level environment calendar is already very crowded. We believe it would be difficult for ministers to attend an additional meeting every year: it should be biennial. Care should also be taken not to interfere with the programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development or to detract from efforts to improve the Commission's own work practices.

At this stage we are not convinced of the merits of the case for universal membership of the UNEP Governing Council. The Governing Council provides for broad representation and is open to the participation of all Governments. Not only does universal membership imply considerable financial costs, but it may well make the Council unwieldy and less efficient.

Thirdly, I would like to refer to the involvement of major groups. Consistent with Australia's recognition of the contributions of non-governmental organizations to the development and practical implementation of international policy, we support the facilitation and encouragement of involvement by non-governmental organizations in UNEP and Habitat. At the same time, the involvement of non-governmental organizations, including from business and industry, as the Task Force suggests, in line with the standards of the Commission on Sustainable Development, would be a major change for UNEP and, in the nature of all changes, would require careful handling.

Allow me to turn briefly to other issues covered by this agenda item.

Australia was pleased to support the decision taken at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly

welcoming the Secretary-General's proposal to designate the Assembly's fifty-fifth session the Millennium Assembly. The Millennium Assembly is an opportunity to look seriously and strategically at the challenges the Organization is facing as we enter the twenty-first century. It is an opportunity to look at whether the Organization is geared to meet those challenges and identify areas where recalibration might be needed. It is an opportunity we should not squander by getting lost in elaborate preparatory processes or allowing only empty ceremonial events to result. We look forward to further discussion on this subject under your guidance, Mr. President, and that of the Secretary-General.

One area where Australia has long felt some recalibration of the Organization is necessary is the electoral group system. The shortcomings of the existing electoral group configuration, which has not seen change for over 30 years, are well known. As we underlined in our statement in the general debate at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, and again in the general debate this year, there are substantial disparities in the size of the various groups and an inadequate level of representation available to many subregions, including Australia's own geographical region of East Asia and the Pacific. We have recognized that reconfiguration of the electoral group system is not something we should rush. But we sense a growing interest in the issue. It is an anachronism that needs to be addressed and an element of reform that merits attention. We repeat our suggestion that it would be timely to begin to discuss the principles on which a new system could be built and to exchange views on how to proceed.

Allow me to conclude with a simple restatement of Australia's commitment to contributing to the ongoing reform of the United Nations. As we said in the general debate, this commitment derives not from a preoccupation with reform for its own sake, but from a desire for the Organization to work better. This is the responsibility of both Member States and the Secretariat, working in partnership. It needs to be systematic and purposeful, both in the formulation of new proposals and in the implementation of proposals already agreed. We look to the Secretary-General to guide us, as he has done so well thus far, by initiating a track 3 reform process.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would first of all like to thank the Secretary-General for the documentation submitted at this session on the item entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals".

In a world of constant change and transformation, adaptation, renewal and reform have become essential qualities in the lives of human beings and their institutions in order to meet the challenges of the modern world in a timely and efficient way. Convinced of this, Mexico supported and continues to support the reform effort undertaken on the initiative of the Secretary-General. I wish to express once again my country's appreciation for the vision and dedication of the Secretary-General in this process of renewal and strengthening of the United Nations.

Mexico believes that on the whole the progress achieved in the implementation of the actions undertaken by the Secretary-General and of the reform measures adopted by the General Assembly is satisfactory. We must continue to work, and I therefore wish to refer to a few specific aspects of the issues before us today.

Mexico is committed to the strengthening and the effective and efficient functioning of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. In this respect, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for the preparation of his report contained in document A/53/463 and its annex.

My Government appreciates and concurs with the direction and objectives of the set of recommendations produced by the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements and looks forward to the opportunity to make our specific comments on their substance, including those recommendations identified by the Secretary-General as measures that could be implemented by him or by the Executive Director. Nevertheless, I would like to mention one aspect that is of particular interest to my country.

The fifth special session of the UNEP Governing Council urged the Executive Director of UNEP, among other things, to

> "ensure that regional issues pertaining to the programme preparation, prioritization and implementation processes of the United Nations Environment Programme are a part of its core mandate" (*A/53/25, annex I, decision SS.V/1, part II, para. 15 (b)*)

and to

> "ensure a clear definition of the functional and structural relationship between the United Nations

Environment Programme and its regional offices". (*ibid., para. 16*)

Unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General and its annex deal only in an isolated and superficial way with the subject of the decentralization of UNEP activities and the strengthening of its regional offices. Recommendations 7 (c) and 12 not only consider the subject indirectly, but also do not seem to respond appropriately to the provisions of paragraph 4 (b) of the Nairobi Declaration, in which our environment ministers considered that

> "Regionalization and decentralization should be strengthened through the increased involvement and participation of regional ministerial and other relevant forums in the United Nations Environment Programme process, complementary to the central coordinating role of the Programme's headquarters in Nairobi". (*A/S-19/5, annex, part I, para. 4 (b)*)

At the same time, the recommendations do not reflect the progress and inputs emanating from the processes of dialogue and political agreement on environmental issues at the regional level, thus side-stepping, *inter alia*, the commitment undertaken by UNEP at the eleventh Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Peru in March this year.

The delegation of Mexico reiterates the priority that it attaches to the strengthening of UNEP as a cornerstone for analysis and action in an increasingly complex framework of multidisciplinary and institutional interaction. The work undertaken by the Task Force is moving in the right direction and deserves the appreciation and support of the General Assembly. At the same time, we believe that room should be made for intergovernmental discussion in order to enrich the substance of the recommendations and thus solidify the commitment of Member States to the strengthening of UNEP.

The report on the implementation of reform activities was circulated only two days ago, so I cannot take a stand on its contents. Nonetheless, I wish simply to reiterate Mexico's commitment to the reform process and to reaffirm our confidence in the Secretary-General in the discharge of the functions assigned to him by the Charter and in particular in the implementation of the actions involved in his reform initiative, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 52/12 A.

Turning to the Secretary-General's proposal to reorganize the Trusteeship Council, the Mexican Government believes that the international community currently has at its disposal a framework of regimes and mechanisms for dealing with questions relating to the environment and shared zones such as the oceans, the atmosphere and outer space. While there is always room for improvement, those diverse legal instruments are working reasonably well. It would be advisable, given their specific, specialized and binding nature, for the necessary adjustments and reforms to come directly from them.

In short, we already have enough legal resources and institutional machinery to deal with these issues. We do not consider it necessary to undertake a new effort of constitutional reform in this respect.

As was very rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in paragraph 1 of the note contained in document A/52/850,

> "The year 2000 constitutes a unique and symbolically compelling moment for Member States to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era."

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the Millennium Assembly proposals. We believe that these will provide a solid foundation for our work so that under your leadership, Mr. President, we can adopt at this session a decision on the convening, the format and the objectives of the Millennium Assembly, as well as on the timetable and the preparatory framework that need to be elaborated by the Secretary-General and the Member States. I would assure the Assembly of the active participation of the Mexican delegation towards this end.

Lastly, I should like to convey the Mexican delegation's full readiness to continue to participate in the consultations on the question of setting limits and time-frames for new initiatives. While Mexico supports this proposal, we believe that its implementation will require the establishment of clear and objective procedures, criteria and parameters.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Since the Secretary-General initiated the reform process last year by submitting a package of far-reaching measures and proposals, the issue of renewal of the United Nations has been present in all our deliberations. Developments during the last session of the General Assembly and during the general debate at the current session

demonstrated that no one can seriously question the need to undertake overall changes in this world Organization.

As we all recall, intensive informal consultations in a plenary format, complemented by a series of so-called informal informals conducted by the President of the previous session with the help of the Friends of the President, culminated in the adoption of two resolutions, 52/12 A and B, which confirmed that the reform process was clearly on track. Those decisions also fuelled our expectations that the spirit of consensus would lead us towards further progress in this important undertaking. But at the same time, it was only an initial step on the long road towards a comprehensive transformation of this Organization.

We therefore hope that under your able leadership, Mr. President, this process will be given new impetus. You can count on the full cooperation of our delegation in this endeavour.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to discuss the reports and the notes submitted by the Secretary-General under this agenda item. At this stage, I would like to comment on some of these documents.

Concerning the report contained in document A/53/463, in general we endorse the recommendations of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In our view, their practical implementation would be very helpful in addressing, in a concrete manner, the pressing problems of environment and sustainable development faced by the international community.

At the same time, we consider that the activities of the Task Force should be of a universal nature. It is regrettable that the Eastern European Group was not given the opportunity to take part in its work.

Some of the proposals, in particular 11, 12 and 13, require further thorough consideration by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly. Our delegation stands ready to take an active part in such deliberations in the spirit of last year's negotiations.

Recommendation 13 (a) on a global economic forum is quite interesting, but in its implementation we should clearly identify the mandate of such a forum in order to avoid any overlap with the work of other intergovernmental bodies such as the high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

It is important, therefore, to translate all these recommendations into enhanced, coordinated actions by the entire United Nations system. Similarly to the approach taken to the initial reform proposals of the Secretary-General, their implementation requires further decisions and measures to be taken at different levels by the Secretariat, by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, and by the Governments themselves.

Regarding the report on the status of the implementation of actions described in the report of the Secretary-General "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General in continuing the implementation of various reform actions.

We welcome in particular the ongoing process of reform in the social and economic sectors of the United Nations. We believe, however, that there is a need for a further strengthening of the interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), especially with regard to the implementation of the plans of actions of major United Nations conferences in the socio-economic fields.

The first steps undertaken by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) also deserve a positive assessment. Its transparent and dynamic work has allowed the strengthening of the Resident Coordinator system and the harmonizing of the activities of the relevant funds and programmes.

We associate the most significant strides in the area of development activities with the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). It is still premature today to make any definitive judgments about the UNDAF pilot projects launched in 18 countries, but we are looking forward to seeing the first results of this endeavour. In our view, UNDAF could help to concentrate the development efforts of the United Nations system as a whole and to establish an effective cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions on the basis of partnership.

We also are encouraged by the recent decision of the UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Board on funding strategies. We hope that the

proposed funding framework might help to overcome the financial crisis in the United Nations development activities.

In this connection, I must note that the Secretary-General's proposal contained in document A/52/1009 for transfer of funds to the Development Account represents an explicit deviation from the original concept of its formation. Let us recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/12 B, envisaged that all funds to be transferred to the Development Account should be accumulated as a result of the efficiency measures taken in this Organization. Our delegation therefore cannot accept the new proposal by the Secretary-General regarding the sustainability of the Development Account based on making appropriations among the Member States under the regular budget.

I would like to underline that, in our view, the Development Account should be formed only through the transferring of funds saved as a result of improving the efficiency of the everyday work of the United Nations Secretariat.

The delegation of Ukraine also welcomes the paper on the Millennium Assembly, which, we believe, could serve as a useful guideline for launching the process of preparing for this important event. We also support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Millennium Assembly a synthesis of the major substantive and institutional implications of the previous events related to the work of the Organization as a whole.

In our opinion, the time has come to determine the main topic on which the Millennium Assembly should concentrate. Otherwise, as many speakers have already stated, we risk convening a merely ceremonial meeting.

In this context, my delegation supports the proposal of the European Union to start consideration of these issues in the format of informal consultations of the plenary chaired by the President of the General Assembly, and that the first meeting in this format be convened before the end of the current session.

With regard to document A/52/851, I would simply endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation that any new initiative should be subject to time limits and that such limits should be stipulated in the relevant resolutions and decisions.

The reform process of the United Nations will be incomplete if it does not embrace the Security Council. This is the key issue in the whole undertaking aimed at renewing this Organization. Unfortunately, our efforts in this direction have reached a point of stagnation, and this situation was confirmed in the course of the recent discussion of the relevant agenda item. In this connection, I would like to recall what the President of Ukraine said in his statement to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly:

> "The most important thing now is to transcend nationally focused approaches by taking into account the common interests of the international community." *(A/52/PV.6, p. 5)*

Finally, our delegation believes that all the recommendations of the Secretary-General now before us deserve thorough consideration. If we really want to see this Organization reformed, we must prove this by our practical deeds. In short, we must revitalize the process. The authority and efficiency of the United Nations today and in the future depend entirely on all of us, the Member States, and therefore we should continue to be the major players.

Mr. Zaki (Pakistan): It is an honour for me to participate in the debate on such a crucial issue as "United Nations reform: measures and proposals".

First of all, I must compliment the Secretary-General for his effective leadership in promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations is the symbol of the international community's firm resolve to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to ensure respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Pakistan is fully committed to achieving these goals for humanity in cooperation with all nations of the world.

We are therefore in favour of all efforts for reform that would strengthen the centrality of the role of the United Nations and its Charter. For these reasons, Pakistan has fully shared the widespread interest that has been generated on this issue in the world's capitals.

The debate today therefore marks an important occasion for all of us. It should give us an opportunity to look back at a year of a reform process to which Member

States devoted energetic efforts and the success of which was a top priority for them.

We have been somewhat disappointed by the fact that this opportunity has been denied to us. We will be unable, today, to draw up a balance sheet and see how far the efforts of the Member States and the Secretariat have met with success, because the Secretariat did not produce the report on the status of implementation of actions, contained in document A/53/676, on time.

Regarding the reform process, it had been agreed that the Secretariat could proceed with the implementation of those actions outlined in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/51/950 that were within the Secretary-General's power to implement, taking fully into account the views expressed by the Member States during the debate at that time. The report requested under resolution 52/12 A was delivered to delegations only on 23 November 1998, when the Assembly began its deliberations on this crucial issue. It needs thorough study by the Member States to ensure that the implementation of actions by the Secretariat was in line with the directive given by the Member States.

For the moment, therefore, my delegation will not comment on the content of document A/53/676. We would, however, support the resumption of this discussion at an appropriate time so that the Assembly can consider this issue of such importance for the future of our Organization. I will, however, avail myself of this opportunity to make some observations on the process initiated under action 12 of the report of the Secretary-General on reform.

We have before us a report entitled "Environment and human settlements", which is contained in document A/53/463. In this regard, my delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

In our view, the Second Committee would be the most appropriate forum to consider this report. We will coordinate our positions with the JCC. Our own assessment, however, goes along with the views of the Secretary-General, and we view the recommendations of the Task Force positively.

In regard to action 12, my delegation had encouraged the efforts of the Secretary-General to streamline the work of the United Nations relating to human settlements and the environment. We are pleased to see the report submitted by the Task Force to the Secretary-General. The Task Force was guided by some of the most eminent experts in the field. We congratulate them for the submission of a comprehensive and analytical report.

This report has been highly commended by the Nairobi chapter of the Group of 77. The views of the G-77 in Kenya are most valuable for our work because our counterparts there closely monitor the organizations we are dealing with. The Member States, as well as the Secretariat, should also bear in mind the points underscored by the Nairobi chapter of the G-77 for further clarification, caution and consultations.

Pakistan would like to support the recommendation of the Task Force for the establishment of an environmental management group under the chairmanship of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The environmental management group should make every effort to attain what the Secretary-General has termed as

> "sustainable equilibrium between economic growth, poverty reduction, social equity and the protection of the Earth's resources, common and life-support systems." *(A/53/463, para. 2)*

We agree with the Task Force that the Secretary-General, through the Executive Director of UNEP, invite the Governments and conferences of parties to consider the implications of operational inefficiencies and costs arising from the geographical dispersion of convention secretariats and ways of overcoming this problem. We stated our views clearly on this issue in the debate on reform, and we are happy to note that the Task Force has taken a similar view.

We are particularly appreciative of the set of recommendations aimed at exploitation of the synergy deriving from the co-location of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).

In extending our support to the recommendations focused on enhancing the contribution and role of civil society and non-governmental organizations, we would like to place greater emphasis on the action that the Secretariat should take with UNEP, Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to identify and make provisions to meet the needs of southern non-governmental organizations. We also recommend that necessary steps should be taken to clarify

the points raised by the Nairobi chapter of the G-77 on recommendations 18 (b) and (c).

My delegation can also go along with the recommendation to hold extensive deliberations within UNEP to provide input for the Millennium Assembly and Forum and also to reflect on the future role of the Trusteeship Council.

While we will return later to the report on the implementation of actions contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/950), I would like to express my views on two other issues to which my delegation attaches great importance — namely, time limits for new initiatives and the Millennium Assembly. With regard to time limits, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to paragraph 61 of the Final Document of the twelfth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held at Durban in September 1998, which directed all members of the Non-Aligned Movement to fully examine the impact of this proposal on the programmes and activities of the Organization. We will continue to coordinate within the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 to reach a joint position on this issue.

With respect to the Millennium Assembly, we are looking forward to this event that would mark the advent of the new millennium for Member States and the United Nations. We suggest that the Member States should seize this opportunity to chart the course of the United Nations for the years to come. For this purpose, it would be advisable that an open-ended working group of the General Assembly be established immediately to coordinate Member States' contributions to that important forum.

In conclusion, we hope that the Assembly will be able to initiate its discussion on document A/53/676, on the implementation of actions, so that Member States can give their considered views in the near future.

Ms. Drayton (Guyana): In 1984, during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar exhorted delegations to

> "look back at the road we have travelled, distil the experience and set out again refreshed and with a new determination. The purposes for which the United Nations was set up are essential for the future of our planet. The vision expressed in the Charter remains, and we should rally to it." (*A/39/1, p. 6*)

This injunction is as valid today as it was then.

As we review our efforts to translate the Charter's vision into reality, I wish, on behalf of the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented at the United Nations to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the efforts which he has made to improve the functioning of the Secretariat. We commend in particular the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General and the appointment made.

The Deputy Secretary-General's mandate to address development issues responds to the calls of Member States for a greater focus and concentration of resources on this core area of the United Nations activities. We are pleased at the increased level of efficiency which has been achieved in the field since the implementation of the most recent reforms and look forward to continued progress.

With respect to the overall reform and strengthening of the United Nations, the report of the Secretary General entitled "Environment and human settlements" (A/53/463) provides a set of guidelines for improving the delivery and impact of the United Nations in the area of environment and settlements. We recognize the need for detailed consideration of the policy recommendations contained in the report and support the call of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China for this to be carried out through an open and transparent process. CARICOM is flexible as to the mechanism which is utilized but urges that there should be no scheduling conflicts with other meetings.

We all know that the root causes of most conflicts lie mainly in economic insecurity. Therefore, in order to fulfil its primary mandate, the United Nations should concentrate as a matter of priority on the promotion of the economic stability of countries. So far, all endeavours to redress the serious imbalance existing between the economies of the industrialized nations and those of developing countries have produced very meagre results. The dialogue between North and South on development issues has not led to any meaningful negotiations for more balanced economic relations or for the reduction of poverty and conflict in our countries of the South. This is mainly due to the confrontational nature of past exchanges. It is only within the last year that we have been able to reach agreement on a process for global negotiations on financing and development under the aegis of the United Nations.

Other elements of the reform process are before intergovernmental bodies. Regarding the proposal for sunset provisions, we await with interest the evaluation of this proposal by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. We consider, however, that every effort should be made to ensure that the mandates of the General Assembly are respected and fulfilled. We are especially concerned that the United Nations should have the necessary resources, human and material, to enable it to fully implement these mandates.

The promises of a new millennium offer us a fresh opportunity for a dialogue on development. CARICOM fully supports the suggestion of the delegation of Belgium to make the eradication of poverty the theme for the Millennium Assembly. The foremost obstacle to peace is poverty, which, when it can be borne, no longer explodes into conflict. It is imperative, therefore, that the problem of poverty be squarely addressed by the United Nations. Reversing the decline in official development assistance and increasing financing through new and innovative sources will help the international community reach the target of halving the incidence of poverty by the year 2015, as proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee.

Reaching this target will require concerted action by both developed and developing countries. We are encouraged by recent signals from some developed partners in the European Union and among the Nordic countries to strengthen their commitment to the development agenda. CARICOM looks forward to a full discussion of these issues in a transparent, intergovernmental process.

We have heard repeatedly that the United Nations should focus on doing what it does best. CARICOM delegations believe that the United Nations is unique in its ability to assist Governments in identifying the types of development policy approaches best suited to their needs, by strengthening national capacities in the management of development processes and channelling donor support for programmes that lead to sustained economic growth and sustainable development. We look to the United Nations to support national strategies for the implementation of programmes of action and commitments reached at the global conferences and summits of the United Nations. The assistance should be within a framework that weighs both economic and social policy on the scales of sustainable development. The United Nations should provide, on a system-wide basis, the inputs, programme development and support necessary to address the requirements identified by developing countries.

We are reminded daily that the historical inequalities between developed and developing nations are not removed by an act of the pen. Globalization and a market economy were, we were assured, going to provide growth and assist in levelling the playing field, but as we have painfully learned in the last few months the market is driven by forces that are outside our domain. Many of our organizations of civil society, including, significantly, sections of our own private sector, are arguing for disengagement and the imposition of controls that will prevent any sudden haemorrhaging of capital from our economies.

If all of humanity is to enter the next millennium captive to a global economic system that continues to widen the distance between rich and poor countries, then all will be lost. We must ensure that the intergovernmental discussions on financing for development and the Millennium Assembly are not merely occasions for further unmet promises and commitments, but a renewed and urgent call to stem the current tide of human suffering. CARICOM would wish to see a global commitment to guaranteeing a process open to non-governmental representatives. This will ensure that the best energies and the widest expertise available to us are involved in the formulation of solutions that will ensure a system grounded in economic and social justice. We look forward to a wide-ranging process of consultations, leading to firm undertakings that will enable us to build together a United Nations fit for service in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam): At the outset, we would like to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

In July of last year, the Secretary-General presented the Assembly with the report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". It contained what the Secretary-General believed to be the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the 52-year history of this Organization. At that time, my delegation welcomed the report and expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his initiative.

With the Secretary-General's initiative, a process of substantive reform has indeed been initiated at the United Nations. The matters and proposals contained in that report were discussed and considered extensively during the last session, through the mechanism of informal

consultations of the plenary of the General Assembly. Reform was so prominent a focus of the work of the General Assembly throughout that year that the fifty-second session of the General Assembly was called the reform Assembly.

The General Assembly adopted by consensus resolutions 52/12 A and B, endorsing all the actions and a number of recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General, while requesting the continued elaboration and consideration of others. At the same time, the General Assembly requested that during the implementation of the matters that were approved, the views expressed by Member States during the process of their consideration and adoption be taken into account.

At the turn of the new millennium, the world is at a time of profound changes. In the nations' search for security and prosperity, great opportunities are combined with enormous challenges. Amid all this, globalization has been evolving as a force that is profoundly affecting each and every nation, both positively and negatively. This was clearly a prominent subject discussed and analysed during the general debate of this session.

Globalization, together with advances in science and technology, especially in information, communications and transportation, has expanded the global market, accelerated the dynamism of productive forces and produced greater changes for cooperation and development. All this has made this world more interdependent than ever. At the same time, the challenges may also do away with the achievements built over time if we as the community of nations do not combine our efforts and forge ahead with determination and effective strategies and actions.

A hurricane in Central America or a financial crisis in East Asia can hold back progress for a decade or so. Poverty, transboundary crimes, environmental degradation, conflicts, etc., continue to be major global concerns that require urgent solutions. In the face of the advances and changes of globalization, the least developed countries have always been more vulnerable and are faced with the danger of being further marginalized.

In its fifty-third year of service to mankind, the United Nations, as the most important Organization, is called upon to adapt and respond effectively to this new environment. Reform is therefore a must. The fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in September 2000, has been designated the Millennium Assembly. This will provide the opportunity for the leaders of the world to decide upon strategies and chart their course of actions as the world and the Organization embark upon the new millennium.

My delegation believes that for that event to be successful there must be adequate preparation through an intergovernmental and preparatory process. We shall continue to make our contribution to the forthcoming discussion of this issue.

My delegation shares the belief that at this session, the General Assembly, while it continues to consider the outstanding issues, should also take a look at the impact of the measures that have been approved. We look forward to the report prepared by the Secretary-General in this respect. We may observe that there have been initial encouraging results of the reform in connection with efficiency and cohesion.

My delegation notes that development has received greater attention and has risen to the top of the Organization's agenda. As we welcome the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General, we reaffirm our conviction that this will further contribute to elevating the profile and leadership of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, including further efforts to strengthen the United Nations as a leading centre for development policy and development assistance.

Earlier this year, the Economic and Social Council and the international financial institutions for the first time organized a joint discussion and dialogue on issues of common concern, focusing on issues of globalization, markets and development. We express our high appreciation for this, because we deem it to have been a very important exercise. The Assembly will continue its consideration of proposals, *inter alia*, on specific time limits for new initiatives, on a results-based budgeting system, and on the utilization of the development account. These proposals need to be thoroughly reviewed and assessed taking into account their implications and bearing in mind the rules and priorities of the Organization. Consideration of these and other proposals requires an open and transparent procedure that allows full and effective participation by delegations and makes possible a focused and substantive discussion.

Reform will be the product of a joint endeavour of determination, hard work, innovation and accommodation, with a view to strengthening the Organization. As it is an ongoing process, it requires constant oversight, review, evaluation and assessment.

Let us join together and move on in this common endeavour to achieve our shared goals.

Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly's debate on the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/950 and entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", the adoption of resolutions 52/12 A and 52/12 B and the negotiations among Governments on subsequent proposals made by the Secretary-General all show that the reform of the United Nations is not an isolated event, but an ongoing dynamic process. As part of that process, the General Assembly at its fifty-third session is again engaged in an analysis of some of the substantive proposals made by the Secretary-General. We take note of the very recent report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/676, and we hope that the Assembly will have an opportunity for substantive discussion of that report.

Having participated actively in the debate and in the negotiation of the proposals in the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and in the Group of 77 and China, the Cuban delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee.

The staff of the United Nations is the principal resource available to Member States for achieving the full implementation of the mandates they define. That staff must play a vital role in the implementation of the reform proposals adopted by the General Assembly. The Cuban delegation attaches special importance to the Secretary-General's proposals for human resource management reform set out in document A/53/414. We view human resource management reform as a system; in our view, the delegation of authority advocated by the Secretary-General can be effectively brought about only in the context of a strengthened mechanism of accountability for programme administrators and of a renewed and effective system of internal justice that truly protects staff members and restores their morale and their trust. We think it would be very useful for the Secretary-General to present an operational plan that would include proposed timetables, and for the Secretariat to supply estimates of the needed resources. This information would complement the general objectives set out in document A/53/414, and would be most important.

The proposal on creating a dividend for development was viewed as among the most innovative elements of the reform package submitted by the Secretary-General. The developing countries welcomed that proposal as a way of supplementing resources allocated for development, which are now growing increasingly scarce and more heavily burdened with conditionality. We have looked forward with interest to further proposals from the Secretariat concerning the modalities and objectives of the development account, and in particular information on the list of projects that would be financed with the $13.1 million approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/221. But these additional proposals have yet to be submitted. It would be a matter for regret if the development account were to be used to reduce the budget in various sectors or to make additional cuts in staff.

We believe that it is up to Member States, in the context of the draft programme budget for the relevant biennium, to approve the main planned efficiency measures. We hope that at this session modalities for making use of the account will be adopted, that the ways in which Member States participate in the various stages of its management will be defined, and that a decision will be taken on the uses and purposes of the $13.1 million approved for the current biennium.

The proposal on results-based budgeting is also of interest. In our view, the Secretariat must provide Member States with additional documents describing the basis for the implementation of this principle, specifically proposals on result indicators, on the impact of the change in budgeting on the level of resources allocated to various sectors, on the accounting mechanisms that would be established, and on the changes in the organizational structure of the Secretariat that would be necessary to ensure the integrity of the planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation cycle, among other elements. A central element of the supplementary documents on this proposal should be an analysis of the impact that this approach to budgeting on various areas of allocation, in particular with respect to staff, consultants, experts and outside contractors.

The Cuban delegation has long been interested in the proposal on sunset provisions, as set out in documents A/52/851 and A/52/851/Add.1. In our view, the medium-term plan not only endorses the main purposes of the Organization and the mandates adopted by its Member States but also directly reflects the criteria guiding the General Assembly's political and budgetary decisions. The financial norms, rules and regulations now in force in the United Nations also reflect the basis of those purposes and mandates. In our view, it would be incorrect for the new concept of time limits to run

counter to the letter and the spirit of those norms and rules. It would not be desirable to change the purposes of the Organization in the name of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the mandates adopted by the General Assembly. The Assembly must continue to have the acknowledged power, at the outset and in accordance with its own decision-making procedures, to establish the duration of each mandate and to decide on the programme and organizational structures needed to achieve the agreed objectives and mandates.

The Cuban delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report (A/53/463) on environment and human settlements; our thanks go also to the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements and, in particular, to its Chairman, Mr. Klaus Toepfer. The revitalization of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is an undoubted priority for the United Nations. In our view, the strengthening of those institutions also requires a needed revitalization of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General are an important starting point on the way to more effective coordination and greater coherence in the areas of environment and human settlements.

In this respect, the Assembly must carefully study every recommendation, especially if we take into account the fact that, in several parts of the report, it is not clear whether the recommendations are based completely or only partially on those of the report of the Task Force. The delegation of Cuba believes that, in addition to institutional action that can be taken to reverse the current situation of these agencies, the lack of sufficient, secure and stable financial resources is the main obstacle to UNEP's and Habitat's playing a more decisive role in their respective areas.

Cuba attaches great importance to the process of preparing and holding the Millennium Assembly, as discussed by the Secretary-General in his document A/52/850. We look forward to the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to Member States to facilitate deliberations and decision-making during the Millennium Assembly.

Nevertheless, we believe that the statements made in the general debate of the fifty-third session, as well as those made by Member States in the debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, could complement the Secretary-General's report with valuable and timely elements of common interest.

Cuba believes that the process of preparing the Millennium Assembly and of negotiating its agenda and the basic documents of that important event should be a transparent exercise open to the participation and broadest possible contribution of all Member States, taking into account the positions expressed in the intergovernmental negotiation process and in the deliberations of the various regional groups and multilateral forums. No contribution from one or several States, however desirable and valuable, can replace the indispensable intergovernmental negotiation process that the Millennium Assembly requires.

We associate ourselves with those delegations that have recommended the establishment of a preparatory committee or an open-ended working group of the General Assembly for this purpose. As the Secretary-General himself says,

> "The year 2000 constitutes a unique and symbolically compelling moment for Member States to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era". (*A/52/850, para. 1*)

Cuba reiterates its full readiness to contribute, in a constructive spirit of cooperation, to the process of reforming the United Nations and to the success of the Millennium Assembly.

Mr. Azaiez (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): In speaking on agenda item 30, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", I would express the full support of the Tunisian delegation for the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Ambassador of South Africa, on behalf of the members of the Movement and the Group of 77. I can thus confine my statement to certain elements that I believe deserve special support.

The first question I wish to address pertains to the very principle of reform. In this context, I am pleased yet again to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the proposals he has made in his report on the reform of the Organization, designed to streamline its operations and enhance its efficiency.

My country, which participated in the various working groups on the renewal of the Organization, is aware of the importance of the objectives pursued by the

reform. Document A/53/676 on the status of implementation of actions described in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" provides in this respect a broad spectrum of all the Organization has undertaken in a few months. Be it a matter of reforms of management, planning, peace-building or the role of the Secretariat in economic and social affairs — to cite only a few areas — to us, the work undertaken seems vast. We hope that the results we achieve will be commensurate with the efforts invested in this enterprise.

The second point I wish to touch upon pertains to the question of the environment and human settlements, addressed in document A/53/463. In this connection, Tunisia congratulates Mr. Klaus Toepfer and the Task Force he led for their excellent work. The recommendations annexed to the report deserve to be studied in an appropriate framework insofar as they are designed to generate new synergies between the various agencies and conventions currently dealing with the environment in one or another of its many aspects, such as desertification and climate change or biodiversity and chemical pollution.

Moreover, my country calls for the implementation of some of the measures proposed if they lead to better coordination of the work between environmental conventions and if they represent a first step towards improved policy coordination, as recently explained by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This should be done while ensuring that each structure has its own identity. This coordination could be undertaken within functional clusters. For instance, issues of biological resources, chemical products and waste, and marine pollution could benefit from a comprehensive approach based on their particular affinities. This is a matter of perception aimed at enhancing interaction and promoting sustained and multifaceted cooperation between existing secretariats and conventions.

In the context of coordinating the activities of various conventions arising out of the Rio Summit and their harmonization with UNEP's work programme, the approach laid out in the Task Force's report on the consolidation of the Nairobi Office deserves to be supported. Indeed, recommendation 4 of the report proposes that

> "other United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes be stimulated to establish or expand activities at Nairobi so as to transform the United Nations compound at Nairobi into a fully active United Nations Office". (*A/53/463, para. 33*)

This is a request of the African States which Tunisia strongly supports.

Lastly, I wish to touch upon certain questions that we have already had the opportunity to consider and on which we have already stated our position. The first is that of time limits for new initiatives — the so-called "sunset clauses". While it understands the arguments for efficiency underpinning this initiative, Tunisia believes that its implications have not been fully grasped and require further review and discussion.

With respect to the Millennium Assembly, the subject of the Secretary-General's note in document A/52/850, we feel that this document contains proposals that largely coincide with the way in which the international community would like to mark the Organization's activities in the next century. In our view, a careful review of these proposals is necessary.

The delegation of Tunisia is in favour of the holding of a high-level debate at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the theme "The United Nations in the twenty-first century", which would constitute the Millennium Summit. Tunisia also welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to prepare a report on the same theme. However, it considers that the date set for his submission of this report, midsummer of the year 2000, is too late and should be advanced by at least six months so as to enable Member States to consider it and to draw the necessary conclusions before the Millennium Summit.

The main sources on which the Secretary-General intends to draw in the preparation of his report are all noteworthy. However, it is important that Member States have an opportunity to offer the Secretary-General their preliminary views on the challenges our Organization will face in the twenty-first century. This could be done in an informal session of the plenary, which could be convened in the next few months.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): As one of the delegations that had the privilege of working closely with your predecessor, Sir, in the negotiations on the Secretary-General's proposals for reform, we are pleased to acknowledge the positive results achieved by the Secretariat over the last year in implementing the

provisions of the reform, as reflected in the report in document A/53/676.

Among these results, the Senior Management Group is now fully operative, ensuring internal coherence in the work of the Organization, and the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General has proven the real value of this timely addition to the structure of the Secretariat. The various departments have undergone substantial changes. They improved their level of coordination and performance, particularly in the areas related to social, economic and humanitarian affairs. We therefore congratulate the Secretary-General for his continuing efforts to reform the Organization and better equip it to face the challenges ahead of us.

The reform process was also firmly pursued through the intergovernmental machinery. Much progress has indeed been achieved in the further consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals by the Economic and Social Council, the executive boards of the funds and programmes and the various committees of the General Assembly. We are particularly pleased with the results of the first humanitarian segment held by the Economic and Social Council, which can be further enhanced. We also welcome the agreement reached by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme to develop a multi-year funding framework with a view to reversing the downward trend in the provision of core resources for the financing of development and technical cooperation.

It is therefore on a very positive note that the General Assembly resumes consideration of the reform issues this week. We are reassured that under your able guidance, Sir, this body will keep up the momentum and build upon the positive results already achieved.

The Brazilian delegation has studied with keen interest the various proposals for action and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the environment and human settlements. They deserve thorough consideration by the Assembly. We believe, as other delegations have already suggested, that our initial discussion on these proposals should benefit first from a frank exchange of views that could preferably take place within informal consultations of the plenary.

The Millennium Assembly will represent a unique moment for Member States to articulate their vision on the role of the Organization in a new era. We must set in motion now the preparatory work for ensuring the success of the Millennium Assembly. It is extremely important that by the end of this year we may have a clear picture of the entire process of preparations.

With that purpose in mind, we trust that a series of plenary informal consultations guided by you, Sir, could greatly benefit from the views of the Secretary-General himself on questions such as possible themes for the Millennium Summit, issues to be focused on in the report to be prepared for the Summit and procedures for the intergovernmental review of the report prior to the Summit.

We generally agree that the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations in the twenty-first century could be prepared following a process of broad consultations involving Member States and other relevant actors. This consultative process both within and outside the United Nations should be carried out during 1999 so as to ensure that the report is available for consideration by Member States early in the year 2000.

In defining the agenda and possible themes for the Millennium Assembly and its Millennium Summit we should preferably avoid a listing of issues that would inevitably lead to a fragmentation of the discussions. In this line, consideration should be given to an overarching theme that could encompass a broad perception of the role of the Organization and inspire an enriching and forward-looking debate.

Strengthening of multilateralism in the face of the new century is our common goal. The overall subject for the Millennium Summit could therefore be the new challenges to the multilateral system posed by globalization, or, in other words, how we may better equip the multilateral system to live up to the many challenges posed by globalization at the beginning of a new century. From this overall subject, specific themes could be derived, with particular attention to the areas of development, poverty eradication and disarmament.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would like, first of all, to express Egypt's support for the statement that was made on behalf of the members of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 on the subject of reform in all its aspects, and especially as regards the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements (A/53/463) under the chairmanship of Mr. Klaus Toepfer.

In this regard, I would like to make a few brief preliminary comments on the United Nations reform process in the field of the environment and human settlements.

First, the Egyptian delegation believes that this process must be carried out in accordance with the mechanism to be determined by the General Assembly, characterized by transparency and the participation of all governmental experts representing the Members of the United Nations. Secondly, Egypt welcomes the report of the Secretary-General and the report of the Task Force as it pertains to coordinating the activities of the United Nations in what we have called the environmental management group. Thirdly, we must maintain the independence of the United Nations Environment Programme Centre and the Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), bearing in mind the specificity of their respective activities.

Fourthly, we feel that there is a need for coordination between the different conventions. But the proposal to merge the secretariats of these conventions could lead to a decline in available resources for each of them, and this would result in the possibility of distorting the priorities of the Organization's work in the context of the various conventions, a matter which must be avoided at any cost. Fifthly, Egypt believes that it is necessary to keep the United Nations Office at Nairobi as an international centre, which is fundamental in dealing with environmental issues.

As we stand at the threshold of the new millennium, which we approach with hope and a sense of challenge, I wish to reaffirm the importance of assessing the achievements of the United Nations at present and of studying the possibility of its participating actively in the next century. The year 2000 is undoubtedly an exceptional opportunity for such consideration, and this is why Egypt has supported the Secretary-General's proposal that the fifty-fifth session be designated the Millennium Assembly. We also support the convening of a Millennium Summit at the same session to be attended by the heads of State and Government, which would adopt a final declaration or Millennium Declaration reaffirming the commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations in the twenty-first century and which would study the ways and means whereby the Organization can contribute to action on the aspirations and challenges of the new era.

Here I would like to affirm that the General Assembly or the Millennium Summit should not confine itself to ceremonial festivities. It should adopt a substantive document embodying the ideas, hopes and aspirations of peoples of the world in the new millennium, one which would constitute a cornerstone and a programme of action for the future.

On the basis of that principle, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt proposed that the preparatory work for the Millennium Assembly should begin at the fifty-third session. This is especially important because good preparation is essential for consensus — as experience at the United Nations, including that of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, has shown. The Foreign Minister said that

> "This is the next-to-last session of the General Assembly in this century. Let it be a session for reflection and preparation for the last session of the twentieth century, next year. Let us take stock of the international work of a whole century, its positive and negative aspects alike. Let us evaluate the achievements and innovations of mankind, where it failed and why. Let us list and analyse the work done and the progress made by the United Nations to crate constructive international cooperation and establish peace. Let us also talk about what remains on the international agenda and what will be left for succeeding generations to finish and accomplish.
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> "In order to evaluate the experience of the past and to chart our future course, I propose that this session create a committee to commence drafting a clear statement to history to be issued at the close of the next session. This statement should include our assessment of the past and our vision of the future. It should be issued a few days before the end of the century and the beginning of the new millennium." (*A/53/PV.15, pp. 15-16*)

Having considered the note by the Secretary-General on this item, Egypt is once again putting its ideas before the General Assembly. We reaffirm that we are ready to work in a serious, flexible, cooperative manner to ensure a successful Millennium Assembly and to fulfil the aspirations and expectations of the peoples of the world who are optimistic about the new era, the new century, and the new millennium.

I turn next to the Secretary-General's proposal on sunset provisions. At the fifty-second session, debate in

the Assembly indicated that further consultations within the groups of Member States were needed on this proposal. In this context, I reaffirm Egypt's commitment to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as affirmed by the leaders of the Movement at Durban. This also reflects the position of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Movement, which calls for further study of all aspects of the proposal by the relevant technical bodies, so that the General Assembly will be able to adopt a reasoned solution.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): My delegation takes the floor to express its full support for the proposed Millennium Assembly, the Special Commission on the United Nations system and the Millennium Forum, which are all facets of measures and proposals for the reform of the United Nations. We agree that the year 2000 constitutes a unique and symbolically compelling moment for Member States to articulate and affirm a new vision for the United Nations in the new era — the new millennium.

We recognize also that the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", document A/51/950, and the action that we have collectively taken so far to implement those changes to which we have agreed do not go far enough in addressing the international realities of this decade and of the new millennium. In our view, the United Nations does not only need cosmetology; it needs to be remodelled to adapt to the new modalities of our world. In fact, in resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, the General Assembly — all of us — recognized the need to consider changes of a more fundamental nature than those set out in the Secretary-General's report.

The restructuring of the regional or electoral groups is, in the view of my delegation, of paramount importance and deserves the urgent attention of all Member States. The present system of regional groups is an anachronism in our world today; it limits the participation of Member States, and in many cases confines them to playing a side-line role. As my colleague from New Zealand eloquently stated at the 64th meeting of the Assembly, during the debate on the reform of the Security Council,

> "The present regional system was put in place some 35 years ago ... This system is sadly out of date; it reflects the political geography of the 1960s, including the cold-war East-West confrontation and the immediate post-colonial period.
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> "...
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> "Since 1963 the membership of the Organization has almost doubled".

To bring that point home, let me note that when the present regional system was put in place some 35 years ago the Pacific was just a vast ocean of overseas colonies and territories. Today there are 14 sovereign independent States, eight of which are Members of the United Nations. Thus, unless there is a serious effort to reconfigure the present regional system, we from the Pacific region will continue, so to speak, to miss the boat here at the United Nations. But we all firmly believe in the principle of "no taxation without representation".

Many countries would like to serve in due course on all the organs of the United Nations but are prevented from doing so by the present configuration of regional groups and their limits. We would like to see an increase in the number of electoral groups and would want the new configuration be organized by geographical location. That could be done by increasing the number of subgroups within the present regional groupings or by creating new electoral groups to take account of present-day political realities. The number of regional groups could be increased from the current five to nine to create equitable geographic and democratic representation. My delegation has specific views on how this reconfiguration can be achieved, and we will be happy to make our contribution in any informal working group that might be set up to address this problem.

The Fiji delegation believes that there should be an established rule of rotation among Member countries in respect of representation on the organs, bodies, commissions and committees of the United Nations system. No Member State should be allowed to serve a second consecutive term if there are other members of its group which have not served as yet. And there is a reason for this: there are a few Member States which are de facto permanent members of United Nations bodies while there are others which have never served on them and would like to do so. The current system lends itself to such undemocratic practices.

Another area is the relationship between the General Assembly and the United Nations. My delegation believes that the General Assembly should be the paramount organ of the United Nations and that the Security Council should function in a structured relationship with the General Assembly. Revision of the Charter is, of course, long overdue, and I am aware that the initiative has already begun through the Open-ended Working Group

on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, under agenda item 59. Our delegation, however, is of the view that an overall review of the Charter should be addressed at the Millennium Assembly and placed before the Millennium Summit for adoption. The other issues I have highlighted could also be similarly dealt with.

In conclusion, let me assure members of our full support for the Millennium Assembly, the Millennium Summit, the Millennium Forum of non-governmental actors and the ministerial level Special Commission. My delegation also supports the new concept of trusteeship as well as the reconstitution of the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): I would like first of all to associate myself with the statement made under this item on 23 November by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China. This fundamental position has on numerous occasions been proclaimed by the higher and supreme bodies of these two important groups of States, with the equally steady support of China. Indeed, since the 1980s the United Nations has been dealing continuously — at the initiative of Member States and of the Secretary-General and his peers in the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Joint Inspection Unit — with a series of accelerated reforms that have simultaneously affected its structures, programmes and procedures, and even its decision-making mechanisms.

The work of the Group of 18 and the important resolution 41/213 are the symbols of these many changes, which have been under way for more than 10 years. The Assembly went beyond just confirming these changes in its most recent resolutions, 52/12 A and 52/12 B, which were adopted after a thorough review of the very important report initiated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan as one of his priority actions. Since then, some of the approved measures have been implemented and others given further consideration. All this work is addressed in the new reports that have been submitted for consideration at this session, either directly in plenary or through the Fifth Committee.

We would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for these reports and also for the complementary introductory statements. This has made it possible for the Member States to carefully follow the entire reform process here or through other deliberating bodies.

With respect to the status of the implementation of the reform decisions relating to the Secretary-General's own responsibilities as set forth in the Charter and confirmed as such in resolution 52/12, a succinct balance sheet is given in the report in document A/53/676, now under consideration. We believe that in several domains this implementation has been effectively and actively initiated. It is too early to decide whether the reforms have achieved all the intended positive effects. Furthermore, in this implementation process, the Secretary-General must redouble his efforts to take greater account of the views expressed by the Member States, particularly those of the non-aligned countries and the Group of 77.

As regards the reports on human resources management, the revolving credit fund, the development dividend, results-based or net-based budgeting and programme planning that are currently under consideration by the Fifth Committee, with the expert assistance of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, it is important to give the Fifth Committee time to provide the Assembly action proposals with a sound technical basis so that the Assembly can take a decision with full knowledge of the facts.

Let us emphasize that any measures suggested in this framework should avoid fragmenting the Secretariat, reducing programmes and lowering staff morale. Rather, when all is said and done, what must be continuously sought is the strengthening of analytic, forecasting and operational capacities on the basis of geographic composition, competence and a diversified distribution of structures and activities in support of the democratization of the daily conduct of the affairs of our Organization, which should not become the preserve of any State or group of States.

The question of sunset provisions or automatic time limits is an important issue, even vital for the life of the United Nations. The issue was unsuccessfully broached when the Group of 18 was working. One problem is that the issue is often taken up in a spirit of reducing activities and concomitantly reducing resources. Second, the issue's political effects — too-frequent or almost continuous haggling and negotiations — and the very great number and complexity of old, current or potential items involved threaten to further complicate the task of the various deliberative and decision-making bodies, transforming them once again into bedlam and

inappropriate quarrelling. Further, as the Secretary-General has noted, the capacity of the existing instruments available for the planning and budgeting cycle is not yet fully utilized. Within the Secretariat, the reform of attitudes is what must be more at the heart of our concerns.

In document A/52/849, the Secretary-General specifies his ideas regarding the new concept of trusteeship referred to in his first report submitted at the fifty-first session. We agree with him that, in view of the ever-increasing interdependence of nations, areas that concern the higher common interests of humanity are increasing as well. Therefore they warrant common trusteeship as regards both the vision for them and their management through the development of appropriate structures. If in order to accomplish this the current Trusteeship Council has to be given a new orientation, as the Secretary-General recommends, such an initiative should be duly considered, taking into account its political and legal implications and, above all, the possible overlap with other existing bodies such as world commissions and high-level permanent or ad hoc divisions of the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly.

With respect to the reform proposals in the field of the environment and human settlements — the subject of the report in A/53/463 — we support the direction taken by the Secretary-General. In the final analysis, these reforms should make it possible to implement the promises to strengthen the status of the United Nations centre in Nairobi.

With respect to the Millennium Assembly, we think that above and beyond the solemnity that has been contemplated for commemorating, as is appropriate, the transition to the twenty-first century, it would be most appropriate to take this opportunity to define the strategic vision for the world of the twenty-first century, outlining in this vision the fundamental directions to be followed; from them establishing, in the form of objectives, the bases for our activities; and, finally and above all, imagining the strategies and the most appropriate ways and means to support these activities.

What is really at stake is the very basis of the planning, programming, budgeting, control and evaluation cycle, which to date has proved none too solid. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposed central theme and outline for the Millennium Assembly preparations, whose ambitious scope encompasses the national, regional and global levels. The Organization should find ways and means to enable all countries, especially the poorest ones, fully to participate in this endeavour.

Ongoing efforts in the Administrative Committee on Coordination aimed at renewing the United Nations system as a whole should be undertaken in moderation, as should the work of the Special Committee proposed by the Secretary-General, which could affect the constitutional structure of the United Nations system as a whole. That decentralized structure was conceived by our founding fathers in their wisdom with the goal of managing all of the relevant bodies democratically and in a specialized manner.

It is appropriate that, on the eve of a new century, we should deploy active and sustained efforts to determine which ideas and institutions are best suited to enabling human beings to enjoy and safeguard, for the benefit of current and succeeding generations, the varied resources that providence has so generously made available to humankind as its common heritage.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly on Monday, 23 November, at the 67th plenary meeting, I now call on the Observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): Switzerland would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on United Nations reform in the field of environment and human settlements. We commend in particular the excellent work of the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements under the chairmanship of Mr. Toepfer, and we thank him and all the members of the Task Force for their constructive effort, undertaken in record time.

Switzerland is in full agreement with the Task Force's analysis with regard to a more coherent and effective approach in the work of the United Nations on environment and sustainable development. We must put a stop to the institutional fragmentation we have witnessed in recent years and begin to shape institutions capable of meeting the immense challenges that the international community faces in the quest for environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Before turning to the specific recommendations of the Task Force, let me quote from paragraph 44, section III, of the annex to the report one short sentence I believe to be particularly relevant: "coordination at the international level should begin at home." Reformed

structures and new methods aimed at optimizing the effectiveness of the United Nations system will bear fruit only if Governments themselves offer coordinated and consistent guidance to the various organs and agencies concerned. In this regard, most of us probably have some more work to do.

For many years Switzerland has had a fairly clear idea of the kind of efficient and well-balanced coordination it would like to see established within the United Nations system in the environmental field. Therefore we fully support the view of the Task Force that, in accordance with the Nairobi Declaration, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should play to the full its part as the lead United Nations environmental agency and enhance its coordinating role with a view to strengthening the linkages and achieving synergy among the various environmental and environment-related conventions.

We also support the recommendation that membership of UNEP's Governing Council be made universal. We believe this change to be necessary if the UNEP Governing Council is to bear primary responsibility for reviewing the environmental performance of the United Nations system and for defining priorities for action in the environmental field.

We must also ensure high-level political support for the Executive Director in the periods between sessions of the Governing Council. While this is at present the task of the high-level Committee of Ministers and Officials, a strengthened Bureau of the Governing Council might play this role in future.

The Task Force's recommendation to convene an annual, ministerial-level global environmental forum, either following the UNEP Governing Council's regular sessions or every other year at a special session, is a proposal that we find very interesting. It does, however, raise some questions with regard to the distinctive roles of UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development. We agree that, according to their respective mandates, the Commission on Sustainable Development should bridge and coordinate environmental, development and socio-economic elements and that UNEP should focus on environmental aspects. That distinction is quite clear in theory, but does not, however, apply in practice. In recent years, the high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development has become a forum where environment ministers meet. If in future the UNEP Governing Council is to assume this role, then we should seriously rethink the functioning of the Commission on Sustainable Development. We should turn it into a global forum for sustainable development with the participation of ministers of economy, development and environment, and avoid potential overlap with UNEP high-level meetings.

In conclusion, I should like to comment on two other important Task Force recommendations concerning the linkages among conventions and the importance of taking regional issues into account. Switzerland shares the concern expressed by the Task Force about the operating costs arising from the geographical dispersion of convention secretariats. We strongly support the recommendation to ponder this situation and redress it. The co-location of new conventions with already existing conventions in the same functional cluster is certainly a good way to increase synergy and ensure greater economies of scale. However, it has become evident in recent years that the global environmental conventions are increasingly complex in character. Each convention has links not only to other conventions, but to a number of international institutions. We therefore believe that in the future we should take into account both criteria when deciding about co-location: convention secretariats should be not only grouped in the same functional cluster, but located in one of the main centres of international cooperation.

Despite the global character of some of our most pressing environmental problems, solutions can often be found only when taking into account specific regional needs and priorities. We therefore fully support the strengthening of UNEP's regional offices, and we also welcome the holding of special sessions of the Governing Council of UNEP in the various regions of the world. At the same time, we believe there is a need to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi with a view to enabling UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to conduct their work under the best possible conditions.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like briefly to comment on the issues that we have been considering, in particular with regard to the Millennium Assembly. I noted that most of the delegations that referred to the issue in their statements reaffirmed their support for the initiative of the Secretary-General. It can be inferred from those statements that it is the wish of the General Assembly to prepare for that event by contributing ideas about its content and format. In that context, the

presidency has heard several specific proposals about how the Assembly could discuss the issue and perhaps agree on recommendations.

I believe that before taking decisions about the way in which the Assembly should consider the question of the Millennium Assembly, it would be appropriate to have an opportunity for a broad and open exchange of ideas with all the delegations of Members of the United Nations so that progress can be achieved in obtaining more precise proposals. We could then decide how to organize the Assembly in relation to its future work.

It is in this spirit that I propose to the Assembly that we should meet again informally to focus exclusively on our possible contributions to preparations for the Millennium Assembly, that we have a broad and open exchange of views next week, at a date and time to be agreed, without prejudice to the later establishment of certain procedures or mechanisms to enable the General Assembly to continue with an exchange of views and deliberations on this issue of such great importance.

If this is acceptable to the Assembly and there are no comments or objections, the presidency will convene that informal meeting in the near future, probably next week.

I should also like to point out that some delegations have referred to the fact that they have had insufficient time to examine in detail document A/53/676, on the status of implementation of actions. Given the dissatisfaction of some delegations, we will probably have to seek a further opportunity on our schedule to discuss that issue in greater detail.

Programme of work

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): On the morning of Monday, 30 November, the General Assembly will take up as its second and third items the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 12, "Report of the Economic and Social Council", and on agenda item 118, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations".

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.